Deepening of the Buckingham Canal

* 106 *Q.*—SRI N. K. PALANISAMY: Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(a) whether any amount was allotted to investigate the deepening of the Buckingham canal to make it navigable throughout the year;

(b) whether the investigation was completed; and

(c) if so, what action was taken as a result thereof?

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI: (a) A sum of Rs. 15,000 has been sanctioned by the Government of India to investigate certain improvements to the North Buckingham canal like deepening it by an extra two feet. The object of deepening is to facilitate movement of heavier boats and increased traffic in the canal. The canal is even now navigable all the 12 months in the year. A draft of three feet is maintained in the north canal and two feet in south canal.

(b) The investigation will be taken up shortly.

(c) Does not arise.

SRI N. K. PALANISAMY: May I know whether the investigation is being made on the basis of any plan to link Visakhapatnam harbour and the Madras harbour with the Buckingham canal and if so, may I know whether the Hon. the Minister will enlighten us with some more information with regard to the scheme and its cost?

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI: The Government of India were requested to sanction Rs 35,000 towards the cost of investigating two schemes. There is a proposal to connect the Buckingham canal with the Madras harbour and this proposal has been included in the Second Five-Year Plan. The cost of this scheme would be 25 lakhs of rupees. The Ministry of Transport was asked to grant Rs. 35,000 for investigating the two schemes, Rs. 15,000 for investigating the scheme for improvements to the canal and Rs. 20,000 in respect of the scheme for connecting it with Madras harbour. The sanction of the Government of India to the latter is awaited. The investigation of the scheme has not yet started pending sanction of the special staff required therefor. Proposals for the special staff are under examination.

SRI V. K. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR: Does the Hon. the Minister know that the work that has been done is very imperfect and very shabby, with the result that transport is affected? Will he issue instructions to the department to see that perfect work is done?

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI: I have stated that the work has not yet started. The hon. Member says that the work done is shabby. I do not know which work he means.

[16th August 1956

Sri V. K. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR : In certain places, the department is doing some work.

The Hon. Sri R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI : It is proposed to improve the canal and the scheme is there to be worked out. Investigation has just been started. Things will be remedied if they are shabby now.

Sri K. VINAYAKAM : The proposed deepening of the Buckingham canal south of Madras by two feet will not be enough since there are pilgrims who travel through this canal from Madras to Tirukalikunram and Mahabalipuram. Will the Government, therefore, take steps to deepen and widen the canal from Madras to Mahabalipuram so that cheap transport facilities may be available to the poor people?

The Hon. Sri R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI : The matter is only in the stage of investigation. Of course, I shall take the opinion of experts in the matter and see whether deepening upto two feet will be sufficient; if it is not, necessary steps will be taken to alter it.

Sri M. R. RAMACHANDRAN : The Buckingham canal as it is today is not useful. Far from being useful, it more often acts as an obstruction to the villagers nearby situated between the canal and the sea. In view of this, will the Government at least see that the canal is closed, if they cannot afford better facilities for traffic on the canal and to the villagers living nearby?

The Hon. Sri R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI : It is not proposed to close the canal. We want to have it and make it available for navigation. After the investigation is completed and the schemes for improvement, etc., are taken up, we will be in a better position to understand and appreciate the entire problem.

Trolley bus service in the City

* 107 *Q.*—Sri N. K. PALANISAMY : Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have received any communication from the Centre suggesting investigation into the possibility of introducing trolley buses in the City of Madras during the year 1955–56; and

(*b*) if so, the action taken thereon?

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : (*a*) Yes, Sir. The Government of India wanted the Madras Government to conduct a preliminary survey on the feasibility of introducing trolley buses in the City of Madras in order to arrive at a decision whether operation of buses on electricity was cheaper than the operation of buses on diesel oil.